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3) Gov't mulls building land-based facility on Camp Schwab as Futenma replacement

ASAHI (Page 1) (Full)
February 19, 2010

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama's administration is considering laying down a land-based tarmac on the premises of Camp Schwab, a U.S. military base in Okinawa Prefecture's northern coastal city of Nago,

as a replacement to take over the heliport functions of the U.S. military's Futenma airfield currently located in the island prefecture's central city of Ginowan, sources have revealed. The newly planned airstrip is 500 meters long and would be combined with the relocation of training exercises to the island of Tokunoshima in Kagoshima Prefecture and some other sites, according to the sources. The Japanese government has informally sounded out the U.S. government on this land-based facility plan. However, Washington and Okinawa are both likely to oppose it.

Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa and Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano met yesterday at the prime minister's office and discussed the idea of building a land-based facility at Camp Schwab. The People's New Party (PNP), one of the ruling coalition partners of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), is also considering a similar plan. PNP President Shizuka Kamei has already explained the plan to DPJ Secretary General Ichiro Ozawa. Ozawa raised no objection to the plan, according to a PNP executive. "I'm an

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outsider as far as this matter is concerned," the executive quoted Ozawa as saying.

According to a government official's explanation, the plan is to install a temporary airstrip on the premises of Camp Schwab for the Futenma-based helicopters. This newly planned facility would not be sufficient for their training, so the government will propose it along with the idea of conducting training exercises at such locations as the outlying islands of Tokunoshima, Tanegashima, and Mageshima in Kagoshima Prefecture.

The PNP has proposed the construction of a 1,500-meter runway. In this case, however, the government would need to assess the possible impact of the runway on its environs. The government has therefore downscaled its plan. The government plan is to construct a 500-meter-long runway for the time being and extend it as needed.

To finalize the Camp Schwab land-based relocation plan, the government will need to obtain consent from Okinawa and the ruling coalition and the U.S. government. Nago Mayor Susumu Inamine yesterday conveyed to Hatoyama his intention to oppose the land-based relocation plan. In addition, Mizuho Fukushima, who has portfolio in the Hatoyama cabinet and heads the Social Democratic Party, which is also a member of the DPJ-led ruling coalition, is also against the plan. A runway with a length of 500 meters would not be long enough for many of the Futenma-based fixed-wing planes to land, so the U.S. government is certain to disapprove of the plan. In campaigning for last year's general election, Hatoyama vowed to relocate Futenma airfield "at least outside Okinawa Prefecture." He will likely come under fire for breaking his promise.

4) Nago mayor voices opposition to building land-based Futenma replacement facility on Camp Schwab in meeting with Hatoyama

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)
February 19, 2010

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama met with Susumu Inamine, mayor of Nago City in Okinawa Prefecture, at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei) yesterday. Inamine campaigned against the existing plan to relocate the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Ginowan City to a coastal area of Camp Schwab in the Henoko district of Nago and won the election. Hatoyama told Inamine: "I take (the outcome of the election) seriously as a manifestation of the popular will. I would like to make utmost efforts to reduce the burden on the Okinawan people." But he stopped short of mentioning any specific relocation site.

Inamine replied: "I have promised the people that I will not allow the construction of a new U.S. base either at sea or on land." He thus expressed his opposition to the building of even a land-based facility on Camp Schwab.

Speaking before reporters at the Kantei last evening, Hatoyama said: "The government is looking into every possible option."

5) Hatoyama tells Inamine that economic package for Northern part of Okinawa and base issue are separate matters

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
February 19, 2010

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Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama held talks with Nago Mayor Susumu Inamine around noon yesterday. Asked by the press corps the same evening about his earlier meeting with Inamine, Hatoyama said at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei): "I told Mr. Inamine that it is necessary to interpret his election as the mayor of Nago as a manifestation of the popular will." Hatoyama thus reiterated his intent to give consideration to the fact that Inamine, who opposes the existing plan to relocate the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station to Nago, was elected the city's mayor last month.

With respect to an economic package for the northern part of Okinawa, Hatoyama said, "Infrastructure in the central and northern parts of Okinawa is not necessarily adequate." He added: "But we must not subscribe to the idea that those areas should accept bases because of that." Hatoyama emphasized that the government will look into an economic package separate from the relocation issue.

6) PNP: We don't want to talk to the SDP

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)
February 19, 2010

Yasumasa Shigeno, secretary general of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), criticized the two plans put together by the People's New Party on where to relocate the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station. In response, PNP policy chief Mikio Shimoji said yesterday: "I feel offended. This could discourage us from discussing the base issue with the SDP."

7) Hatoyama not to limit options for Futenma relocation

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
February 19, 2010

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama said yesterday with respect to the issue of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Ginowan, Okinawa Prefecture: "The (government and the ruling parties') examination committee is looking into the matter with all options in mind. I have no intention of indicating what is good or bad." The Prime Minister thus reiterated his view not to exclude any plans, including the existing plan to relocate the base to Nago. Hatoyama made this remark in response to a question from a reporter at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei).

Hatoyama held talks with Nago Mayor Susumu Inamine for the first time at the Kantei yesterday morning. Inamine expressed his opposition to the relocation. In response, Hatoyama simply said, "It is necessary to take the results of the mayoral election as a manifestation of the popular will."

8) SDP secretary general urges Prime Minister to postpone deadline for determining Futenma relocation site

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
February 19, 2010

Social Democratic Party Secretary General Yasumasa Shigeno indicated in a press conference yesterday that Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama should consider postponing the end-of-May deadline for determining where to relocate the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station, now situated in Ginowan, Okinawa Prefecture. Shigeno said, "It is more

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important to come up with a measure that is acceptable to the people of Okinawa."

Meanwhile, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano emphasized in a press conference yesterday: "Determining the site by the end of May is the Prime Minister's order, his decision, so we must reach a conclusion by then."

9) DPJ Okinawa chapter stresses opposition to Futenma relocation within Okinawa

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
February 19, 2010

Teruhisa Mimori

Shokichi Kina, head of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) Okinawa chapter, held a news conference in Naha City on Feb. 18 where he criticized the government and DPJ headquarters' stance on the relocation of the U.S. forces' Futenma Air Station. He reiterated the Okinawa chapter's opposition to relocation within the prefecture.

Kina voiced the following criticism against the government and party headquarters: "They do not appear to be working seriously to consider and find ways to relocate (the Futenma base) out of Okinawa or out of Japan. They have neither given any explanation to nor consulted with the Okinawa chapter."

Okinawa chapter policy chief, Okinawa Prefectural Assembly member Tadashi Uesato also criticized Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano, who is scheduled to visit Okinawa on Feb. 19. He said: "We requested a meeting but the request was turned down. He has not shown any willingness to listen to the local people's views. This behavior runs counter to the notion of local autonomy."

Social Democratic Party (SDP) Diet Affairs Committee chairman Kantoku Teruya, who is opposed to the proposal to relocate the Futenma base to the inland area of Camp Schwab, stated on Feb. 18: "The DPJ Okinawa chapter has made the right decision in placing importance on the popular will in Okinawa. This coincides with the SDP's thinking and is highly commendable," hailing the DPJ Okinawa chapter.

10) Prime Minister Hatoyama-hosted panel to tackle threats from China, North Korea: New National Defense Program Guidelines to take center-stage of discussion

YOMIURI (Top play) (Full)
February 19, 2010

On Feb. 18, the government held at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei) the first meeting of the Prime Minister Hatoyama-hosted round-table on security and defense capability in a new era (chaired by Keihan Electric Railway CEO Shigetaka Sato). Participants launched discussions in the lead up to the compilation of a new national defense plan (National Defense Program Guidelines), which will serve as future guidelines for the consolidation of the nation's defense capability. The panel is expected to finalize a report possibly by this summer. The government will aim at compiling new guidelines, amending the existing ones before year's end, based on the report.

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Prime Minister Hatoyama in a speech given at the outset of the meeting said: "A review of the defense system calls for both continuity and change. Please pursue discussions without sacred cows."

He also indicated his stance of designating how to deal with threats from North Korea and China as a central issue, while steering clear of mentioning China by name. He said: "Discussions must be conducted from the viewpoint of how Japan should deal with the escalation of nuclear and missile development by North Korea and the modernization of the military of Japan's neighbor."

The prime minister ordered participants to look into issues from a

mid- to long-term perspective, citing deepening the Japan-U.S. alliance, international cooperation, such as UN PKO activities and anti-terrorism measures, as well as new threats like cyberterrorism. The panel will hold a discussion meeting twice a month. The first meeting brought together Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirano, Foreign Minister Okada, and Defense Minister Kitazawa.

After the meeting Kitazawa assembled senior defense officials and held a meeting of the defense council, the ministry's study panel for the compilation of new national defense guidelines. The defense minister said, "I asked the round-table to discuss how to consolidate the foundation of the defense industry, on the precondition that the Hatoyama administration will basically abide by the three principles on weapons' exports." He thus revealed that he requested the relaxation of three principles on arms exports to be put on the agenda.

11) Gov't officials off to U.S. to reaffirm nuclear deterrence

ASAHI (Page 4) (Abridged)
February 19, 2010

Senior officials from the Foreign Ministry and the Defense Ministry left Japan yesterday for the United States to consult with U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Roberts and other U.S. government officials on the United States' "extended deterrence," such as its "nuclear deterrence" for Japan. They are expected to reaffirm the extended deterrence since the U.S. government will work out a report on its "nuclear posture review," or NPR for short, to be presented to the U.S. Congress in March.

The senior officials include Kazuyoshi Umemoto, director general of the North American Affairs Bureau at the Foreign Ministry. According to Foreign Ministry officials, Roberts is one of the officials involved in the Pentagon's work of formulating the NPR, which will be a guideline for the United States' nuclear policy over the next decade.

On Feb. 2, the Foreign Ministry hosted a meeting of the "Security Subcommittee" (SSC), an intergovernmental consultative body made up of working-level officials for foreign affairs and defense from Japan and the United States. On that occasion, the Japanese and U.S. governments agreed to step up their bilateral cooperation in order for Japan and the United States to "deepen" their bilateral alliance in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the signing of the current security pact between the two countries. At an SSC meeting last summer, the Japanese and the U.S. governments concurred on launching periodical consultations on the extended deterrence.

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However, the two governments intend to accelerate their consultations and reach an agreement in this area as a product of the "deepening" of the alliance, as well as in missile defense and other areas, on the occasion of U.S. President Obama's visit to Japan, possibly in November.

12) Maehara: We will deal harshly with antiwhaling activist

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)
February 19, 2010

In connection with the transfer of a Sea Shepherd Conservation Society activist to Japan after being held for intruding into a Japanese research whaling ship's patrol vessel in the Southern Ocean, Seiji Maehara, minister of land, infrastructure, transport, and tourism, stated at a House of Representatives Budget Committee session yesterday afternoon: "As soon as he arrives (in Japan), we will deal with the matter harshly." Sea Shepherd is a U.S. environmental conservation group.

In this context, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Takahiro Akamatsu said: "The activist will be turned over to the Japan Coast Guard (JCG) for a thorough investigation. I think there is a possibility the case will be sent to prosecutors. But I want to leave the issue to the JCG, which has investigative authority."

13) Akamatsu to raise issue of Sea Shepherd's harassment at IWC general meeting

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)
February 19, 2010

Yesterday at a House of Representatives Budget Committee session, Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries Minister Takahiro Akamatsu said, "We cannot condone" the U.S. Sea Shepherd Conservation Society's harassment of a Japanese research whaling vessel. Akamatsu disclosed his intention to attend a general meeting of the International Whaling Commission, which will be held in Morocco in June, in order to seek international understanding of Japan's research whaling.

14) FM Okada refuses impromptu interviews by reporters

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)
February 19, 2010

Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Press Club on Feb. 18 that he will no longer respond to impromptu interviews by reporters at the Prime Minister's Official Residence after cabinet meetings or at the Diet. Okada's office pointed out that it was agreed within the cabinet that statements made at official and informal cabinet meetings will not be made public, except for the summaries prepared in advance. Okada holds his regular news conference in the afternoon on days cabinet meetings are held, but so far, he has only responded briefly to reporters' questions right after the cabinet meetings.

15) BOJ governor concerned about drop in government bond prices; opposes inflation target

NIKKEI (Page 5) (Excerpts)
February 19, 2010

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Bank of Japan (BOJ) Governor Masaaki Shirakawa said in a press conference after a meeting of the central bank's monetary policy meeting yesterday: "Global market players are paying more attention to the sustainability of finances recently." He thus expressed concern that the nation's poor fiscal condition could lead to a drop in government bond prices. Regarding monetary policy, he indicated a cautious view about substantially increasing the BOJ's purchases of long-term government bonds, saying: "The central banks' monetary policy is not aimed at helping fiscal financing (procurement of national funds)." Shirakawa also indicated that the central bank does not favor any specific target that would force it to take action to push up commodity prices.

In the meeting yesterday, the participants unanimously agreed to maintain the current BOJ policy rate at around 0.1 PERCENT and maintain its assessment of the economy as "recovering."

Referring to Greece's fiscal crisis, Shirakawa said: "The BOJ will continue to carefully watch the effects of the crisis on domestic and foreign markets by exchanging information with other countries' central banks." He added: "The crisis has sharpened the focus on fiscal trends and their effects on the financial markets." Regarding Japan's finances, the BOJ governor said, "Government bonds have been selling well and their yields remain low and stable," but he also expressed concern by mentioning that "domestic finances are in a grave state."

Reluctance to increase purchases of government bonds

In order to avoid a sharp drop in government bond prices, Shirakawa emphasized that it is imperative for each country "to show the way toward fiscal reconstruction and to secure market confidence." He stressed: "Central banks should not make financing fiscal spending a goal in managing monetary policy. It is necessary to have governments respect such a stance and to secure confidence of the markets." With this indirect expression, Shirakawa indicated his cautious view about significant increasing the BOJ's purchases of

government bonds.

Shirakawa said that most of the policy board members feel the target for medium to long-term price stability should be around 1 PERCENT inflation, and that this is best suited for the current situation. Finance Minister Naoto Kan proposed a policy goal of around 1 PERCENT inflation on Feb. 16, but the BOJ governor expressed a negative view about Kan's idea.

ROOS